

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

## POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY, IOWA

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State. And it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills. But I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Pottawattamie County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to secure funding in Pottawattamie County worth over \$24 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than \$65 million to the local economy.

Of course my favorite memories of working together have to include the Pottawattamie County Preschool Initiative plan was developed to dramatically expand preschool for more than 250 unserved children, several affordable housing and main street reconstruction projects, as well as work on transportation infrastructure and airport improvements. While I have worked to secure more than \$2.8 million for the Pottawattamie County Preschool Initiative, as part of the private-public partnership, the Iowa West Foundation also committed \$7 million for the early learning initiative. This is the type of investment Iowa needs to ensure a brighter economic future for every student. I look forward to learning how this program has impacted students in Pottawattamie County.

## Among the highlights:

Investing in Iowa's economic development through targeted community projects: In Western Iowa, we have worked together to grow the economy by making targeted investments in important economic development projects including improved roads and bridges, modernized sewer and water systems,

and better housing options for residents of Pottawattamie County. In many cases, I have secured Federal funding that has leveraged local investments and served as a catalyst for a whole ripple effect of positive, creative changes. For example, working with mayors, city council members, and local economic development officials in Pottawattamie County, I have fought for over \$16 million to reconstruct the Avenue G viaduct, over \$2.5 million for affordable housing projects, and secured \$2 million to make sure the airport got priority for a new runway through the Federal Aviation Administration, helping to create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

School grants: Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That is why, for the past decade and a half, I have secured funding for the innovative Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program—better known among educators in Iowa as Harkin grants for public schools construction and renovation. Across 15 years, Harkin grants worth more than \$132 million have helped school districts to fund a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools. In many cases, these Federal dollars have served as the needed incentive to leverage local public and private dollars, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect within a school district. Over the years, Pottawattamie County has received \$5.1 million in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Pottawattamie County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling \$168,650.

Keeping Iowa communities safe: I also firmly believe that our first responders need to be appropriately trained and equipped, able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, Pottawattamie County's fire departments have received over \$1.5 million for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

Wellness and health care: Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole range of initiatives to improve the health of individuals and families not only at the doctor's office but also in our communities, schools, and workplaces. I am so proud that Americans have better access to clinical preventive services, nutritious food, smoke-free environments, safe places to engage in physical activity, and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. These efforts not only save lives, they will also save money for generations to come thanks to the prevention of costly chronic diseases, which account for

a whopping 75 percent of annual health care costs. I am pleased that Pottawattamie County has recognized this important issue by securing more than \$5.6 million for the Community Health Center.

Disability Rights: Growing up, I loved and admired my brother Frank, who was deaf. But I was deeply disturbed by the discrimination and obstacles he faced every day. That is why I have always been a passionate advocate for full equality for people with disabilities. As the primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, and the ADA Amendments Act, I have had four guiding goals for our fellow citizens with disabilities: equal opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency. Nearly a quarter century since passage of the ADA, I see remarkable changes in communities everywhere I go in Iowa—not just in curb cuts or closed captioned television, but in the full participation of people with disabilities in our society and economy, folks who at long last have the opportunity to contribute their talents and to be fully included. These changes have increased economic opportunities for all citizens of Pottawattamie County, both those with and without disabilities. And they make us proud to be a part of a community and country that respects the worth and civil rights of all of our citizens.

This is at least a partial accounting of my work on behalf of Iowa, and specifically Pottawattamie County, during my time in Congress. In every case, this work has been about partnerships, cooperation, and empowering folks at the State and local level, including in Pottawattamie County, to fulfill their own dreams and initiatives. And, of course, this work is never complete. Even after I retire from the Senate, I have no intention of retiring from the fight for a better, fairer, richer Iowa. I will always be profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Iowa as their Senator.●

## HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA

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